

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 605. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JULY 3, 1880.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXXIV. "LET US DRINK A GLASS OF WINE TOGETHER."

SILVERBRIDGE pondered it all much as he went home. What a terrible story was that he had heard! The horror to him was chiefly in this—that she should yet be driven to marry some man, without even fancying that she could love him! And this was Lady Mabel Grex, who on his own first entrance into London life, now not much more than twelve months ago, had seemed to him to stand above all other girls in beauty, charm, and popularity!

As he opened the door of the house with his latch-key, who should be coming out but Frank Tregear—Frank Tregear with his arm in a sling, but still with an unmistakable look of general satisfaction. "When on earth did you come up?" asked Silverbridge. Tregear told him that he had arrived on the previous evening from Harrington. "And why? The doctor would not have let you come if he could have helped it."

"When he found he could not help it, he did let me come. I am nearly all right. If I had been nearly all wrong I should have had to come."

"And what are you doing here?"

"Well; if you'll allow me I'll go back with you for a moment. What do you think I have been doing?"

"Have you seen my sister?"

"Yes, I have seen your sister. And I have done better than that. I have seen your father. Lord Silverbridge—behold your brother-in-law."

"You don't mean to say that it is arranged?"

"I do."

"What did he say?"

"He made me understand, by most unanswerable arguments, that I had no business to think of such a thing. I did not fight the point with him—but simply stood there, as conclusive evidence of my business. He told me that we should have nothing to live on unless he gave us an income. I assured him that I would never ask him for a shilling. 'But I cannot allow her to marry a man without an income,' he said."

"I know his way so well."

"I had just two facts to go upon—that I would not give her up, and that she would not give me up. When I pointed that out he tore his hair—in a mild way, and said that he did not understand that kind of thing at all."

"And yet he gave way."

"Of course he did. They say that when a king of old would consent to see a petitioner for his life, he was bound by his royalty to mercy. So it was with the duke. Then, very early in the argument, he forgot himself, and called her—Mary. I knew he had thrown up the sponge then."

"How did he give way at last?"

"He asked me what were my ideas about life in general. I said that I thought Parliament was a good sort of thing, that I was lucky enough to have a seat, and that I should take lodgings somewhere in Westminster till—— 'Till what?' he asked. 'Till something is settled,' I replied. Then he turned away from me and remained silent. 'May I see Lady Mary?' I asked. 'Yes; you may see her,' he replied, as he rang the bell. Then when the servant was gone he stopped me. 'I love her too dearly to see her grieve,' he

said. 'I hope you will show that you can be worthy of her.' Then I made some sort of protestation, and went upstairs. While I was with Mary there came a message to me, telling me to come to dinner."

"The Boncassens are all dining here."

"Then we shall be a family party. So far, I suppose I may say it is settled. When he will let us marry, Heaven only knows. Mary declares that she will not press him. I certainly cannot do so. It is all a matter of money."

"He won't care about that."

"But he may perhaps think that a little patience will do us good. You will have to soften him." Then Silverbridge told all that he knew about himself. He was to be married in May, was to go to Matching for a week or two after his wedding, was then to see the Session to an end, and after that to travel with his wife in the United States. "I don't suppose we shall be allowed to run about the world together so soon as that," said Tregear, "but I am too well satisfied with my day's work to complain."

"Did he say what he meant to give her?"

"Oh, dear, no—nor even that he meant to give her anything. I should not dream of asking a question about it. Nor, when he makes any proposition, shall I think of having any opinion of my own."

"He'll make it all right—for her sake, you know."

"My chief object as regards him, is that he should not think that I have been looking after her money. Well, good-bye, I suppose we shall all meet at dinner?"

When Tregear left him Silverbridge went to his father's room. He was anxious that they should understand each other as to Mary's engagement. "I thought you were at the House," said the duke.

"I was going there, but I met Tregear at the door. He tells me you have accepted him for Mary."

"I wish that he had never seen her. Do you think that a man can be thwarted in everything and not feel it?"

"I thought—you had reconciled yourself—to Isabel."

"If it were that alone I could do so the more easily, because personally she wins upon me. And this man, too—it is not that I find fault with himself."

"He is in all respects a high-minded gentleman."

"I hope so. But yet, had he a right to set his heart there, where he could make his fortune—having none of his own?"

"He did not think of that."

"He should have thought of it. A man does not allow himself to love without any consideration or purpose. You say that he is a gentleman. A gentleman should not look to live on means brought to him by a wife. You say that he did not."

"He did not think of it."

"A gentleman should do more than think of it. He should think that it shall not be so. A man should own his means or should earn them."

"How many men, sir, do neither?"

"Yes; I know," said the duke. "Such a doctrine nowadays is caviare to the general. One must live as others live around one, I suppose. I could not see her suffer. It was too much for me. When I became convinced that this was no temporary passion, no romantic love which time might banish, that she was of such temperament that she could not change—then I had to give way. Gerald, I suppose, will bring me some kitchen-maid for his wife."

"Oh, sir, you should not say that to me."

"No; I should not have said it to you. I beg your pardon, Silverbridge." Then he paused a moment, turning over certain thoughts within his own bosom. "Perhaps, after all, it is well that a pride of which I am conscious should be rebuked. And it may be that the rebuke has come in such a form that I should be thankful. I know that I can love Isabel."

"That to me will be everything."

"And this young man has nothing that should revolt me. I think he has been wrong. But now that I have said it I will let all that pass from me. He will dine with us to-day."

Silverbridge then went up to see his sister. "So you have settled your little business, Mary."

"Oh, Silverbridge, will you wish me joy?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"Papa is so stern with me. Of course he has given way, and of course I am grateful. But he looks at me as though I had done something to be forgiven."

"Take the good the gods provide you, Mary. That will all come right."

"But I have not done anything wrong. Have I?"

"That is a matter of opinion. How can I answer about you, when I don't quite know whether I have done anything wrong or not myself? I am going to marry the girl I have chosen. That's enough for me."

"But you did change."

"We need not say anything about that."

"But I have never changed. Papa just told me that he would consent, and that I might write to him. So I did write, and he came. But papa looks at me as though I had broken his heart."

"I tell you what it is, Mary. You expect too much from him. He has not had his own way with either of us, and of course he feels it."

As Tregear had said, there was quite a family party in Carlton Terrace, though as yet the family was not bound together by family ties. All the Boncassens were there, the father, the mother, and the promised bride. Mr. Boncassen bore himself with more ease than anyone in the company, having at his command a gift of manliness which enabled him to regard this marriage exactly as he would have done any other. America was not so far distant but what he would be able to see his girl occasionally. He liked the young man, and he believed in the comfort of wealth. Therefore he was satisfied. But when the marriage was spoken of, or written of, as "an alliance," then he would say a hard word or two about dukes and lords in general. On such an occasion as this he was happy and at his ease.

So much could not be said for his wife, with whom the duke attempted to place himself on terms of family equality. But in doing this he failed to hide the attempt even from her, and she broke down under it. Had he simply walked into the room with her as he would have done on any other occasion, and then remarked that the frost was keen or the thaw disagreeable, it would have been better for her. But when he told her that he hoped she would often make herself at home in that house, and looked, as he said it, as though he were asking her to take a place among the goddesses of Olympus, she was troubled as to her answer. "Oh, my Lord Duke," she said, "when I think of Isabel living here and being called by such a name, it almost upsets me."

Isabel had all her father's courage, but she was more sensitive; and though she would have borne her honours well, was oppressed by the feeling that the weight was too much for her mother. She could not keep her ear from listening to her mother's words, or her eye from watching her mother's motions. She was prepared to carry her mother everywhere. "As other girls have to be taken with their belongings, so must I, if I be taken at all." This she had said plainly enough. There

should be no division between her and her mother. But still knowing that her mother was not quite at ease, she was hardly at ease herself.

Silverbridge came in at the last moment, and of course occupied a chair next to Isabel. As the House was sitting, it was natural that he should come up in a flurry. "I left Phineas," he said, "pounding away in his old style at Sir Timothy. By-the-bye, Isabel, you must come down some day and hear Sir Timothy badgered. I must be back again about ten. Well, Gerald, how are they all at Lazarus?" He made an effort to be free and easy, but even he soon found that it was an effort.

Gerald had come up from Oxford for the occasion that he might make acquaintance with the Boncassens. He had taken Isabel in to dinner, but had been turned out of his place when his brother came in. He had been a little confused by the first impression made upon him by Mrs. Boncassen, and had involuntarily watched his father. "Silver is going to have an odd sort of a mother-in-law," he said afterwards to Mary, who remarked in reply that this would not signify, as the mother-in-law would be in New York.

Tregear's part was very difficult to play. He could not but feel that though he had succeeded, still he was as yet looked upon askance. Silverbridge had told him that by degrees the duke would be won round, but that it was not to be expected that he should swallow at once all his regrets. The truth of this could not but be accepted. The immediate inconvenience, however, was not the less felt. Each and everyone there knew the position of each and everyone—but Tregear felt it difficult to act up to his. He could not play the well-pleased lover openly, as did Silverbridge. Mary herself was disposed to be very silent. The heart-breaking tedium of her dull life had been removed. Her determination had been rewarded. All that she had wanted had been granted to her, and she was happy. But she was not prepared to show off her happiness before others. And she was aware that she was thought to have done evil by introducing her lover into that august family.

But it was the duke who made the greatest efforts, and with the least success. He had told himself again and again that he was bound by every sense of duty to swallow all regrets. He had taken himself to task on this matter. He had done so even out loud to his son. He had

declared that he would "let it all pass from him." But who does not know how hard it is for a man in such matters to keep his word to himself? Who has not said to himself at the very moment of his own delinquency: "Now—it is now—at this very instant of time, that I should crush, and quench, and kill the evil spirit within me; it is now that I should abate my greed, or smother my ill-humour, or abandon my hatred. It is now, and here, that I should drive out the fiend, as I have sworn to myself that I would do"—and yet has failed.

That it would be done, would be done at last, by this man was very certain. When Silverbridge assured his sister that "it would come all right very soon," he had understood his father's character. But it could not be completed quite at once. Had he been required to take Isabel only to his heart, it would have been comparatively easy. There are men, who do not seem at first sight very susceptible to feminine attractions, who nevertheless are dominated by the grace of flouncers, who succumb to petticoats unconsciously, and who are half in love with every woman merely for her womanhood. So it was with the duke. He had given way in regard to Isabel with less than half the effort that Frank Tregear was like to cost him.

"You were not at the House, sir," said Silverbridge, when he felt that there was a pause.

"No, not to-day." Then there was a pause again.

"I think that we shall beat Cambridge this year to a moral," said Gerald, who was sitting at the round table opposite to his father. Mr. Boncassen, who was next him, asked, in irony probably rather than in ignorance, whether the victory was to be achieved by mathematical or classical proficiency. Gerald turned and looked at him. "Do you mean to say that you have never heard of the University boat-races?"

"Papa, you have disgraced yourself for ever," said Isabel.

"Have I, my dear? Yes, I have heard of them. But I thought Lord Gerald's protestation was too great for a mere aquatic triumph."

"Now you are poking your fun at me," said Gerald.

"Well he may," said the duke sententiously. "We have laid ourselves very open to having fun poked at us in this matter."

"I think, sir," said Tregear, "that they are learning to do the same sort of thing at the American Universities."

"Oh, indeed," said the duke in a solemn, dry, funereal tone. And then all the little life which Gerald's remark about the boat-race had produced was quenched at once. The duke was not angry with Tregear for his little word of defence—but he was not able to bring himself into harmony with this one guest, and was almost savage to him without meaning it. He was continually asking himself why destiny had been so hard upon him, as to force him to receive there at his table, as his son-in-law, a man who was distasteful to him. And he was endeavouring to answer the question, taking himself to task and telling himself that his destiny had done him no injury, and that the pride which had been wounded was a false pride. He was making a brave fight; but during the fight he was hardly fit to be the genial father and father-in-law of young people who were going to be married to one another. But before the dinner was over he made a great effort. "Tregear," he said—and even that was an effort, for he had never hitherto mentioned the man's name without the formal Mister—"Tregear, as this is the first time you have sat at my table, let me be old-fashioned, and ask you to drink a glass of wine with me."

The glass of wine was drunk, and the ceremony afforded infinite satisfaction at least to one person there. Mary could not keep herself from some expression of joy by pressing her finger for a moment against her lover's arm. He, though not usually given to such manifestations, blushed up to his eyes. But the feeling produced on the company was solemn rather than jovial. Everyone there understood it all. Mr. Boncassen could read the duke's mind down to the last line. Even Mrs. Boncassen was aware that an act of reconciliation had been intended. "When the governor drank that glass of wine it seemed as though half the marriage ceremony had been performed," Gerald said to his brother that evening. When the duke's glass was replaced upon the table, he himself was conscious of the solemnity of what he had done, and was half ashamed of it.

When the ladies had gone upstairs the conversation became political and lively. The duke could talk freely about the state of things to Mr. Boncassen, and was able gradually to include Tregear in the badinage with which he attacked the conservatism of his son. And so the half-hour passed well. Upstairs the two girls immediately

came together, leaving Mrs. Boncassen to chew the cud of the grandeur around her in the sleepy comfort of an arm-chair. "And so everything is settled for both of us," said Isabel.

"Of course I knew it was to be settled for you. You told me so at Custins."

"I did not know it myself then. I only told you that he had asked me. And you hardly believed me."

"I certainly believed you."

"But you knew about—Lady Mabel Grex."

"I only suspected something, and now I know it was a mistake. It has never been more than a suspicion."

"And why, when we were at Custins, did you not tell me about yourself?"

"I had nothing to tell."

"I can understand that. But is it not joyful that it should all be settled? Only poor Lady Mabel! You have got no Lady Mabel to trouble your conscience." From which it was evident that Silverbridge had not told all.

CHAPTER LXXV. THE MAJOR'S STORY.

By the end of March Isabel was in Paris, whither she had forbidden her lover to follow her. Silverbridge was therefore reduced to the shifts of a bachelor's life, in which his friends seemed to think that he ought now to take special delight. Perhaps he did not take much delight in them. He was no doubt impatient to commence that steady married life for which he had prepared himself. But nevertheless, just at present, he lived a good deal at the Beargarden. Where was he to live? The Boncassens were in Paris, his sister was at Matching with a houseful of other Pallisers, and his father was again deep in politics.

Of course he was much in the House of Commons, but that also was stupid. Indeed everything would be stupid till Isabel came back. Perhaps dinner was more comfortable at the club than at the House. And then, as everybody knew, it was a good thing to change the scene. Therefore he dined at the club, and though he would keep his hansom and go down to the House again in the course of the evening, he spent many long hours at the Beargarden. "There'll very soon be an end of this as far as you are concerned," said Mr. Lupton to him one evening, as they were sitting in the smoking-room after dinner.

"The sooner the better as far as this place is concerned."

"The place is as good as any other.

For the matter of that I like the Beargarden since we got rid of two or three not very charming characters."

"You mean my poor friend Tifto," said Silverbridge.

"No; I was not thinking of Tifto. There were one or two here who were quite as bad as Tifto. I wonder what has become of that poor devil!"

"I don't know in the least. You heard of that row about the hounds?"

"And his letter to you."

"He wrote to me—and I answered him, as you know. But whither he vanished, or what he is doing, or how he is living, I have not the least idea."

"Gone to join those other fellows abroad, I should say. Among them they got a lot of money—as the duke ought to remember."

"He is not with them," said Silverbridge, as though he were in some degree mourning over the fate of his unfortunate friend.

"I suppose Captain Green was the leader in all that?"

"Now it is all done and gone I own to a certain regard for the major. He was true to me, till he thought I snubbed him. I would not let him go down to Silverbridge with me. I always thought that I drove the poor major to his malpractices."

At this moment Dolly Longstaff sauntered into the room and came up to them. It may be remembered that Dolly had declared his purpose of emigrating. As soon as he heard that the duke's heir had serious thoughts of marrying the lady whom he loved he withdrew at once from the contest, but, as he did so, he acknowledged that there could be no longer a home for him in the country which Isabel was to inhabit as the wife of another man. Gradually, however, better thoughts returned to him. After all, what was she but a "pert poppet?" He determined that marriage clips a fellow's wings confoundedly, and so he set himself to enjoy life after his old fashion. There was perhaps a little swagger, as he threw himself into a chair and addressed the happy lover. "I'll be shot if I didn't meet Tifto at the corner of the street."

"Tifto!"

"Yes, Tifto. He looked awfully seedy, with a greatcoat buttoned up to his chin, a shabby hat, and old gloves."

"Did he speak to you?" asked Silverbridge.

"No; nor I to him. He hadn't time to think whether he would speak or not, and you may be sure I didn't."

Nothing further was said about the man,

but Silverbridge was uneasy and silent. When his cigar was finished he got up saying that he should go back to the House. As he left the club he looked about him as though expecting to see his old friend, and when he had passed through the first street and had got into the Hay-market there he was! The major came up to him, touched his hat, asked to be allowed to say a few words. "I don't think it can do any good," said Silverbridge. The man had not attempted to shake hands with him, or affected familiarity; but seemed to be thoroughly humiliated. "I don't think I can be of any service to you, and therefore I had rather decline."

"I don't want you to be of any service, my lord."

"Then what's the good?"

"I have something to say. May I come to you to-morrow?"

Then Silverbridge allowed himself to make an appointment, and an hour was named at which Tifto might call in Carlton Terrace. He felt that he almost owed some reparation to the wretched man—whom he had unfortunately admitted among his friends, whom he had used, and to whom he had been uncourteous. Exactly at the hour named the major was shown into his room.

Dolly had said that he was shabby—but the man was altered rather than shabby. He still had rings on his fingers, and studs in his shirt, and a jewelled pin in his cravat; but he had shaven off his moustache and the tuft from his chin, and his hair had been cut short, and in spite of his jewellery there was a hang-dog look about him. "I've got something that I particularly want to say to you, my lord." Silverbridge would not shake hands with him, but could not refrain from offering him a chair.

"Well; you can say it now."

"Yes; but it isn't so very easy to be said. There are some things, though you want to say them ever so, you don't quite know how to do it."

"You have your choice, Major Tifto. You can speak or hold your tongue."

Then there was a pause, during which Silverbridge sat with his hands in his pockets trying to look unconcerned. "But if you've got it here, and feel it as I do"—the poor man as he said this put his hand upon his heart—"you can't sleep in your bed till it's out. I did that thing that they said I did."

"What thing?"

"Why, the nail! It was I lamed the horse."

"I am sorry for it. I can say nothing else."

"You ain't so sorry for it as I am. Oh, no; you can never be that, my lord. After all, what does it matter to you?"

"Very little. I meant that I was sorry for your sake."

"I believe you are, my lord. For though you could be rough you was always kind. Now I will tell you everything, and then you can do as you please."

"I wish to do nothing. As far as I am concerned the matter is over. It made me sick of horses, and I do not wish to have to think of it again."

"Nevertheless, my lord, I've got to tell it. It was Green who put me up to it. He did it just for the plunder. As God is my judge it was not for the money I did it."

"Then it was revenge."

"It was the devil got hold of me, my lord. Up to that I had always been square—square as a die! I got to think that your lordship was upsetting. I don't know whether your lordship remembers, but you did put me down once or twice rather uncommon."

"I hope I was not unjust."

"I don't say you was, my lord. But I got a feeling on me that you wanted to get rid of me, and I all the time doing the best I could for the 'orses. I did do the best I could up to that very morning at Doncaster. Well; it was Green put me up to it. I don't say I was to get nothing; but it wasn't so much more than I could have got by the 'orse winning. And I've lost pretty nearly all that I did get. Do you remember, my lord"—and now the major sank his voice to a whisper—"when I come up to your bedroom that morning?"

"I remember it."

"The first time?"

"Yes; I remember it."

"Because I came twice, my lord. When I came first it hadn't been done. You turned me out."

"That is true, Major Tifto."

"You was very rough then. Wasn't you rough?"

"A man's bedroom is generally supposed to be private."

"Yes, my lord—that's true. I ought to have sent your man in first. I came then to confess it all, before it was done."

"Then why couldn't you let the horse alone?"

"I was in their hands. And then you was so rough with me! So I said to myself, I might as well do it; and I did it."

"What do you want me to say? As far as my forgiveness goes, you have it."

"That's saying a great deal, my lord—a great deal," said Tifto, now in tears. "But I ain't said it all yet. He's here; in London!"

"Who's here?"

"Green. He's here. He doesn't think that I know, but I could lay my hand on him to-morrow."

"There is no human being alive, Major Tifto, whose presence or absence could be a matter of more indifference to me."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, my lord. I'll go before any judge, or magistrate, or police officer in the country, and tell the truth. I won't ask even for a pardon. They shall punish me and him too. I'm in that state of mind that any change would be for the better. But he—he ought to have it heavy."

"It won't be done by me, Major Tifto. Look here, Major Tifto; you have come here to confess that you have done me a great injury."

"Yes, I have."

"And you say you are sorry for it."

"Indeed I am."

"And I have forgiven you. There is only one way in which you can show your gratitude. Hold your tongue about it. Let it be as a thing done and gone. The money has been paid. The horse has been sold. The whole thing has gone out of my mind, and I don't want to have it brought back again."

"And nothing is to be done to Green!"

"I should say nothing—on that score."

"And he has got they say five-and-twenty thousand pounds clear money."

"It is a pity, but it cannot be helped. I will have nothing further to do with it. Of course I cannot bind you, but I have told you my wishes." The poor wretch was silent, but still it seemed as though he did not wish to go quite yet. "If you have said what you have got to say, Major Tifto, I may as well tell you that my time is engaged."

"And must that be all?"

"What else?"

"I am in such a state of mind, Lord Silverbridge, that it would be a satisfaction to tell it all, even against myself."

"I can't prevent you."

Then Tifto got up from his chair, as though he were going. "I wish I knew what I was going to do with myself."

"I don't know that I can help you, Major Tifto."

"I suppose not, my lord. I haven't twenty pounds left in all the world. It's the only thing that wasn't square that ever I did in all my life. Your lordship couldn't do anything for me? We was very much together at one time, my lord."

"Yes, Major Tifto, we were."

"Of course I was a villain. But it was only once; and your lordship was so rough to me! I am not saying but what I was a villain. Think of what I did for myself by that one piece of wickedness! Master of hounds! member of the club! And the horse would have run in my name and won the Leger! And everybody knew as your lordship and me was together in him!" Then he burst out into a paroxysm of tears and sobbing.

The young lord certainly could not take the man into partnership again, nor could he restore to him either the hounds or his club—or his clean hands. Nor did he know in what way he could serve the man, except by putting his hand into his pocket—which he did. Tifto accepted the gratuity, and ultimately became an annual pensioner on his former noble partner, living on the allowance made him in some obscure corner of South Wales.

A HOME HOSPITAL.

THERE are few large families in the country which do not enjoy the advantage of one member possessed, not only of common-sense, but of the faculty of expressing the same in vigorous language. Very often it is a maiden aunt, plain of attire, curt of speech, and independent as to means, who is the common-sense pythoness of the family—the homely priestess of a commonplace Olympia. It is she who rebukes the romantic folly of young persons, who probably would listen less calmly to her remonstrances had they not expectations of inheriting the lands, messuages, and tenements settled upon her. Such a one is my Aunt Julia, who, if I were not too much in awe of her, I should be tempted to describe as a hardbitten female. She has a knack of snapping out unpleasant truths, just as she snaps up the midday mutton-chop. In a shy and furtive manner we call her Aunt Judy behind her square uncompromising back, but I at least know better than to assume any insolent familiarity in her presence. She makes very few bites of me in a general way.

Snap goes the cutting remark, just like the snap of her purse—very rarely undone, by the way—and I feel as if I had made an idiot of myself. Metaphorically, I wear a fool's-cap, and stand in the corner for the rest of the day. I know she despises me as a scribbler, and contemns me as a sentimentalist. Yet she likes me to tell her the news, thinking probably in the meantime of the rattling of peas in a wind-bag or the crackling of thorns under a pot.

A few days ago I came in brimful of a story which had excited my sympathetic and sentimental entity to an unusual degree. A very excellent artist of my acquaintance had just succeeded in nursing his only son through a violent attack of chronic rheumatism. For two months he had hardly had his clothes off his back, and looked the shadow of himself; but his boy had pulled through, and he was happy. To my frivolous mind this father appeared as a hero and martyr deserving of the highest honour, and I said so with perhaps more excitement in my tone than the occasion warranted, looking meanwhile at Aunt Julia for a grim smile, her nearest approach to any expression of sympathy. The square jaws remained as firmly set as ever, as my aunt closed a card-case she had in her hand with a sudden bang which startled me.

"How much," she asked "does your friend the painter make in a week?"

"He is not a very successful man," I replied, "but he makes two thousand pounds a year. Say forty pounds a week."

"Then your friend is a very great fool. Foolish!—indeed, considering that he has a wife and six daughters to keep besides the precious son, I may say wicked—a most perverse and wicked person."

I was thunderstruck. It had never occurred to me to view Sandy McCoyle in the light of a reckless and hardened criminal.

"Eight weeks," recommenced Aunt Julia. "Eight weeks at forty pounds per week is three hundred and twenty pounds the wicked man has thrown away while he has saved the thirty-two regular professional nursing would have cost him. He is, I make it, two hundred and eighty-eight pounds the poorer by his folly."

Now, nothing crushes me like statistics. I felt that poor McCoyle was not the man I had once thought him; but I determined to make one more struggle on his behalf.

"Just think of the devotion implied by such an action, my dear aunt. Think of a man giving up everything to be sure his

son was well nursed. McCoyle would not confide his child to the care of mercenary strangers. He did the important work himself, instead of carelessly handing it over to hirelings."

"Who would have done it much better, and got his boy round in half the time. Four pounds a week did I say? Why, the Home Hospital would do it for three, and get rid of the invalid out of the house as well. I suppose you know nothing about the home hospitals, designed to help poets, painters, and others who cannot be properly nursed at home?"

After inspecting the Home Hospital for Paying Patients established at Fitzroy House, Fitzroy Square, it must be confessed that Aunt Julia and those of her way of thinking have at least made an important advance in the right direction. It seems strange that such important machinery for dealing with sickness should have been neglected so long in this country. It is needless to open a discussion so wide as that on the general system of hospitals, concerning which my Aunt Julia has some strong opinions of her own. From better authority than even that of my aunt I am obliged to believe that a very great proportion of the gratuitous hospital aid and accommodation, provided by the benevolent for the poor of this country, is really enjoyed by persons who, if not rich, are able to pay for medical attendance. Of course, it would be absurd to suppose that very wealthy persons go when sick to eleemosynary hospitals; but it is not the less certain that both outdoor and indoor patients, who ought to be ashamed of their meanness, are not too proud to secure hospital advice and care under false pretences. I must confess that I do not lift my hands in horror at this new proof of the shabbiness of mankind. As Aunt Julia would observe: "You can't get people to pay money for what they can get for nothing." If any person of liberal mind doubts the large incidence of this rule, let him once occupy the position of one supposed to possess influence with operatic impresarii and ordinary theatrical managers, and his ideas will be widened very considerably. Why I—even I—whose theatrical connections are of the slenderest kind, am nearly maddened by applications from wealthy friends for free boxes and stalls—demands which mean neither more nor less than that I am to lay myself under such personal obligation as would seriously interfere with the freedom of my critical remarks, in order

that old Lady Hawkby and her daughter, that lean spinster Miss Buzzard, who have between them not a farthing under four thousand a year, may display their fine aquiline profiles and osseous shoulders in a box on the grand tier. Rich people are hideously shabby. I know men who draw a larger income from landed property than I can possibly earn, and who, instead of a large family, have only themselves to support, who worry me to death for the odd stalls, and front seats generally, which they suppose to be always concealed about my person; and the worst of all this is that I cannot serve them as I once did a bore of the first magnitude. At the period referred to I was supposed to know some of the secrets of the Turf. As a matter of fact I knew little enough, but it is quite enough to have a reputation of any kind to get the noble army of spungers and dead-heads round about one. This man made a dash at me, and asked me what would win the Oaks. I said I did not know, but thought—the first name that came uppermost. The animal won easily. My new friend was radiant, and at Ascot nearly drove me wild by following me about to pick up what he called “crumbs of information.” The crumbs must have made a substantial loaf by the end of the Ascot Meeting—my shadow declared me infallible, and the next week began to harass me about a number of forthcoming events. I made up my mind to have done with him, and selected for him thenceforth such animals as were not likely to run. A month of this treatment rid me of him for ever. Now, if I could only send old Lady Hawkby and Miss Buzzard to the opera one night when it was burnt down, I might get rid of them; but fires are not so common as stalking-horses—mere quadrupeds on paper—and I despair.

Just as operatic and theatrical managements are abused, so is the charity extended by many noble hospitals. In his work on Pay Hospitals Mr. H. C. Burdett tells a story instructive in its bearings on the establishment of such institutions. The writer has heard it asserted publicly, by a tradesman of large means, that he always gets the best medical advice for his family and himself for a shilling, instead of a guinea. He declared, and indeed boasted, that anyone so minded can get the opinion of the majority of the most eminent consultants in London, with less trouble, and in less time, by paying one shilling to the hospital porter, than by going to their

private houses. He said: “Go to St. Thomas’s or Bartholomew’s, or to what hospital you will, apply at the out-patient room on Dr. —’s morning, tell the porter your time is valuable, and you want to see the doctor early, and give him a shilling. Thus, in less than an hour, you procure, not only the best medical advice, but the best medicine into the bargain. If you go to the private house of this eminent doctor you may be kept waiting two or three hours, and at the end of that time you may be told that no more patients can be seen that day.” The truth of the tradesman’s assertion has been proved to be accurate in fact by actual experiment, and, although the abuse has been cut down a good deal of late years, it still exists in part. Now, if a man is mean enough to save his sovereign, and to rob the profession and the hospital in the out-patient department, is it likely, is it reasonable to suppose, this same man and those who think with him will scruple to abuse the in-patient department when it comes to be a question of twenty, fifty, or a hundred guineas for an operation? Who can believe it?

It is not, however, by the act of plunderers like this, but from the ordinary conditions of existence, that persons of the middle class are perhaps worse tended than anybody else. As Mr. Walter put it: “There are only two great classes of persons who in sickness or any accident are able to obtain the best medical skill and the best nursing, namely, the very poor and the very rich.” At the present moment, in every district of the country, a pauper has at hand the well-regulated work-house infirmary. The agricultural labourer can generally obtain accommodation at the cottage hospitals, which during the last twenty years have been opened in many parts of England. Artisans and small tradesmen find in the general hospitals in the large towns of Great Britain accommodation suited to their habits of life and requirements, in which they can associate with companions of similar tastes. But a man of limited means and of fair education—a poor clergyman, an officer of the army or navy on half-pay or pension, a bank clerk, or an unsuccessful barrister—cannot pay fees to the best physicians and surgeons, and has no refuge except the common ward of the general hospital, in which he will be compelled to associate with ten or twenty other men of very different habits of life from his own. Such a one may be able to pay the ordinary

expense of a short illness, but then he must submit to all the inconveniences attendant upon sickness in private lodgings, or he may reside in a small house among a bevy of children. In London roomy houses are almost impossible to any but persons of large income. If a person of moderate means be overtaken by illness it is almost impossible for him to find the required quiet or isolation in his own dwelling. He is afflicted with a disease for the cure of which free ventilation is absolutely necessary. Unless money can fill his room with currents of fresh air, no price can purchase the remedy of which he is in need. Or he is so afflicted that perfect quiet is essential to his recovery, and he is maddened by the abominable noise which fills many parts of London from morning till night. The late Charles Dickens once graphically described such a situation: "That constant passing to and fro, that never-ending restlessness, that incessant tread of feet wearing the roughest stones smooth and glassy, is it not a wonder how the dwellers in narrow ways can bear to hear it? Think of a sick man in such a place, listening to the footsteps, and in the midst of pain and weariness, obliged, despite himself (as though it were a task he must perform), to detect the child's step from the man's, the slipshod beggar from the booted exquisite, the lounging from the busy. Think of the hum and noise always present to his senses, and of the stream of life that will not stop, pouring on, on, on, through all his restless dreams, as if he were condemned to lie dead, but conscious, in a noisy churchyard, and had no hope of rest for centuries to come." Yet this evil, thus powerfully presented to the imagination, is but one of the often and melancholy catalogue which illness in London inflicts beyond the natural and necessary consequences of illness.

From the purely monetary point of view the victim of sickness is sorely imposed upon. Expenses are materially increased by the extortions of lodging-house keepers. In the case of a bachelor or a spinster who occupies small suitable lodgings the case of the patient is made worse by the deeply-rooted dislike of lodging-house keepers to sickness, and the almost insane terror of a death taking place in the house. In addition to the downright cruelty experienced at the hands of the less scrupulous of this class, there is the hideousness of such nursing as the casual charwoman or lodging-house "slavey" is likely to be able to

render, and the nauseous wretchedness of the unpalatable and often-sickening compounds made to do duty for beef-tea and other light nourishment ordered by the medical attendant.

In many countries the sorrow of sickness under such circumstances as these has been reduced by the establishment of "*maisons de santé*," or private pay-hospitals of various grades. Such misery as that endured by Pendennis when confined to his bed by illness in the Middle Temple with no nurse but the drunken laundress, who acted as charwoman on ordinary occasions, has long been made at least unnecessary in the chief cities of the United States. Pay-hospitals have been established in many places, and pay-wards added to the eleemosynary institutions. The Massachusetts General Hospital has gone so far ahead as to establish a regular ambulance service. In New York City a new hospital, intended almost entirely for the well-to-do class, was established two years ago by Dr. W. H. Van Buren. The cost of this hospital, and the grounds which surround it, is estimated at one hundred and eighty thousand pounds, although the number of beds provided is but one hundred and fifty. There is not a single free bed in the institution, except those (very few) devoted to accident cases. The payments range from four shillings and sixpence a day in the large wards, to ten pounds ten shillings a week in difficult cases. The hospital has been most sumptuously furnished and decorated. The rooms for private patients have been fitted up with Eastlake furniture, Turkey rugs, and plate-glass mirrors. The halls have tessellated floorings, brass fixtures, small Axminster rugs by each of the beds, and electric signals to all parts of the building. The bath-rooms, lavatories, and other arrangements are declared to be perfect models of comfort and cleanliness. A feature of this modern pay-hospital is the recreation-room, in which the attractions of a conservatory are combined with those of an aquarium. A platform for a band has been placed at one end of this room, so that the musical tastes of the patients are carefully considered. So far the hospital seems to be fairly popular, and the wards continue to be about two-thirds full. An innovation has been introduced in connection with this institution, which is scarcely likely to prove popular with the medical profession. This consists in the establishment of a dispensary for out-patients, to which all persons, without distinction, are

admitted to the benefits of this branch of the hospital service on payment of five shillings a month. All prescriptions are made up at the hospital for one uniform cost of ten cents.

Pay-hospitals, or pay-wings to hospitals of the ordinary type, have also been established in Switzerland as well as in France, in Germany and Austria, in Spain and Italy, Sweden and Norway, in Canada and the Colonies, in Ireland and parts of England. In London also the pay or part-pay system has been growing apace. Provident dispensaries, as they are called, have been tried at Brighton, Coventry, and Northampton, and the pay or part-pay method has been largely developed in London at the Central Throat and Ear Hospital in the Gray's Inn Road. These latter efforts, however, are mainly directed towards out-patients—an idea differing very much in quality and degree from that of indoor-patients paying a reasonably liberal sum for nursing and maintenance. The first of the latter kind in London was the Sanatorium, or Home in Sickness, at Devonshire Place, New Road, described as an establishment for the nursing and surgical care of persons belonging to the middle classes. This institution came to an end by reason of too much business, for the demands upon it became so great that funds could not be raised to meet the extensions required.

It was determined that the new venture at Fitzroy House, Fitzroy Square, should not be attempted without a sufficient fund, and a meeting was held in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House, on June 27, 1877, to raise the necessary capital.

A committee was formed, presided over by the Duke of Northumberland, and up to the first of January in this present year some nine thousand seven hundred pounds were received. The judicious investment of this sum proved a more serious matter than the raising of it, for the dislike to sickness seems to extend from lodging-house keepers upwards to the great lords of the soil. It was determined to begin operations in the west of London, and after the ground lease had been submitted to no less eminent an authority on the law of real property than Sir Henry Jackson, Bart., Q.C., Berkeley House, Manchester Square, was purchased by the Home Hospitals Association. It had been found difficult to discover suitable premises unless fettered by terms which would exclude an hospital. The ground lease of Berkeley House, however, was

considered sufficiently open, and the purchase having been effected, work was commenced. Then the storm burst. The tenants of property around Berkeley House rose like one man, and pointed out that what was rather a club-house for the sick than an hospital would become a centre of impurity—a nuisance of the most flagrant kind. Manchester Square bristled with grievances, real and imaginary. It was urged that the unhappy patients would come betwixt the wind and the nobility of the neighbourhood, and that ears polite would be outraged by unseemly sounds, as eyes equally polite would be shocked by uncanny sights. The garden of the square would be constantly occupied by persons with bandaged heads and splintered limbs. All the seats would be monopolised by pallid creatures just clinging to a remnant of life, and who might possibly transfer their diseases to others before sinking into the tomb. The streets would be constantly occupied by funerals, and the pavement encumbered by undertakers' assistants. Horrible shrieks would issue from the ill-fated mansion; sleep would become impossible to the neighbours; and gruesome sights might at any moment burst upon them. All this and more was said, but the association confided in its lease and held its ground. Then the ground landlord, Lord Portman, took the matter up, and the question was tried before the Master of the Rolls, who decided against the home hospital in a luminous judgment, which, if pushed to its logical consequence, would invalidate the leases of half of the physicians' houses in London. The association had then no resource but to find a freehold house elsewhere, and purchased the freehold of Number Sixteen, Fitzroy Square, where work will be commenced on the first of July. The Managing Committee and the Honorary Secretary, Mr. H. C. Burdett, have, therefore, had many difficulties and delays to fight against; but at last, after infinite vexation, have accomplished a very good piece of work in setting Fitzroy House in perfect order.

The Home Hospital is on the north side of Fitzroy Square, and is easily distinguished by its neat and pretty appearance. The influence of the so-called Queen Anne style is visible enough. There is plenty of coloured glass and light green paint, but the sombre hues popular of late among decorators have been dismissed as too gloomy for a house the first essential of which is to be, and the second to look, as

clean and light as possible. There is, on the other hand, nothing about it of that whitewashed hospital look even more ghastly than the most bilious hues. The aspect of Fitzroy House may be described as that of the home of a family of taste and refinement. It is cheerful, fresh, and clean, without being either stony or garish. A ring at the bell brings a man-servant to the door, and I am admitted into a cheerful well-lighted hall, and ascend a staircase arranged on that invaluable "palazzo" principle, which makes the stairs form part of a well or ventilating shaft for the entire house. It is, by the way, hardly from any special inventiveness in the Italian or any other mind that the great central staircase has found its way into the larger domestic buildings. Palazzo and manor-house, castle and hospital, owe their form to the old original laager of the nomad—the waggons ranged in a square so as to form a fortified camp. In the older country houses of England may be seen the process of development from a four-sided block of building surrounding an open quadrangle to the modern mansion. In the very olden time there were external staircases looking on the quadrangle and corridors connecting them, such as may be seen in the old coaching inns still left in England and in the immense caravanserais of Germany and North Italy. The next step, very distinctly marked in St. Giles's House, the seat of Lord Shaftesbury, is the roofing in of the quadrangle and the building of a grand staircase in the space enclosed. Thus the courtyard becomes a central hall, having communication with every part of the structure and supplying the means of ample ventilation. Imitative man has of course gone on building on these lines without reference to ventilation. That this view is correct may be gathered from the extreme care with which windows, especially in country places, were nailed or painted firmly down till within a very few years. The twin gospels of fresh air and pure water have not been preached very long. I can recollect when there was no such thing as a sanitarian, when ventilation was defined as "a mild term for an abominable draught," and tubbing, except on Saturday nights or Sunday mornings, was entirely confined to the wealthier classes of the community. I have heard it loudly asserted, within ten years, that many more people die of over ventilation than of foul air, and that perpetual tubbing

makes the human body painfully and dangerously sensitive to cold. It is therefore gratifying to find that pure air, pure water, a good light, and perfect sanitary appliances, characterise Fitzroy House, which has, in addition to every other known contrivance for promoting the health and comfort of its inmates, an apparatus for flushing the drains with an immense supply of water always on hand.

A short flight of stairs leads to the offices of the lady superintendent, Mrs. Bluett, who rises from behind an oaken writing-table to receive visitors, who have either come to London for an operation requiring perfect care during the patient's recovery from the shock, or who apply on behalf of friends or relations to whom it is found impossible to give proper attention at home. The tariff Mrs. Bluett follows by no means rises so high as that of Dr. Van Buren's establishment in New York. It has also been calculated that when the scale of the establishment is taken into consideration a low minimum rate would only secure failure. Under existing arrangements not more than twenty or four-and-twenty beds are calculated upon, and it has therefore been decided to fix the minimum price at three guineas per week for lodging, nursing, and maintenance; the patient being attended by his or her own medical adviser, who will be considered responsible for the professional care of the case. Here is an important difference at once from ordinary hospital management. At Fitzroy House patients are to be under their own medical advisers, except when they have none in London, when they may choose from a list kept at the Home Hospital of physicians and surgeons willing to attend patients there and living within easy distance. For obvious reasons the managing committee reserve to themselves the right of refusing to admit or retain any person as an inmate of Fitzroy House without giving any reason for such a decision; and all persons will be admitted on the condition that they are liable to be removed from the house at any time by the committee. It is in fact a Nursing Club with a committee vested with extraordinary powers and hedged round with necessary precautions. Persons suffering from epilepsy, lunacy, or diseases of an infectious or contagious nature are ineligible for admission, as are confessedly incurable cases, and midwifery cases; the object of the association being to help as many persons

per annum as the space at their disposition will admit of. The rules, to which attention is drawn by Mrs. Bluett, forbid expressly any patient from bringing into the institution or using any article of food or drink without permission, in order that the regular diet system prescribed by the medical adviser of the patient may not be infringed; and patients are not to smoke elsewhere than in the smoking-room. Fitzroy House has not followed one of its American exemplars in a curious item of tariff. At the transatlantic institution referred to, sufferers from delirium tremens are charged double the usual rate; but whether the increased charge is required as extraordinary remuneration for tending troublesome patients, or as a penal infliction on the too ardent pursuit of cocktails, is not explained.

The general tone of the interior decorations of Fitzroy House is white and light green. Considerable tact has been displayed in selecting wall-paper of such pattern that patients lying in bed may not be able to count the squares or sprays, and designs of an "altogether" character, as Byron said of after-dinner conversations, have been preferred to those of a stiffly decorative or geometrical cast. The wall-papers have moreover been treated in a manner specially adapted to the wards of sick-rooms. Every bit has been thoroughly varnished so that it can be washed down at will. The floors also are bare, and beeswaxed; in fact, there is nothing of a fluffy, "stuffy" nature anywhere in the house. The furniture is all brand-new, and of ash or pine, the light-coloured woods being a guarantee for cleanliness. So far as is humanly attainable, perfect purity seems to have been achieved. A very clever system of ventilation has been applied to every window, and cross-ventilation is secured by the best appliances. Finally, Mrs. Bluett, the lady superintendent, is herself a skilled nurse, and was lately in charge of the Teignmouth Infirmary.

Great public interest must attach to this first venture of the Home Hospital Association, being as it is the prelude of a scheme for bringing home the benefits of cottage hospitals to the unprovided middle classes of England.

THE TRIP BEFORE MY WEDDING.

I RETURNED from England to Philadelphia, where I was "raised"—to use the vernacular for once—in the summer of

187—. I had been away five years, and one chief reason for my coming home at this particular time was to see what I thought of Minnie Corleigh, and to find out what she thought of me. Minnie was about a fifth cousin or so of mine, and although nothing particular had ever been said, so far as I knew, in the matter, yet I was conscious, and so doubtless was she, that there was a sort of vague, floating expectation in our families that we should some day get married, and a correspondence, vague enough also, had been kept up between us. The firm I served wishing to send a confidential person to the States, I volunteered to go, and it was understood that I need not hurry my return, as—to complete the circle of vagueness—my employers had a notion that I meant to get married. In this they were at the time rather ahead of myself, but they proved pretty good judges.

I found on my arrival that Squire Corleigh and his family had just removed a trifle west—some fifteen hundred miles or so, which to my British-drilled mind at first seemed an appalling distance; but as no one to whom I spoke seemed to think that a few miles more or less was of any consequence, why I soon ceased to think it amounted to much, and as, very fortunately, some business arising from my mission called me out west, I was very soon in Kansas. There I resumed my acquaintance with Mr. Corleigh and Minnie, and with Annie, Mattie, Polly, Fanny, Abel, Seth, Matthew, and Zachary Corleigh as well, for the farmer had a large family. He was a big, tall, loud-voiced man—somewhat hasty, dogmatic, and overbearing, I thought—but generous to a fault, and evidently disposed to like me. As for Minnie, she was the prettiest girl of the family, and of a good many families around too; and whereas I had gone somewhat disposed to be critical and fault-finding, I fell plump in love before I had been at the farm twenty-four hours.

In the short time that I was with the Corleighs on each visit—I made several before the infernal trip I am about to relate—I grew to be excellent friends with all the neighbours for twenty miles round, and they all seemed to take it for granted that I and Minnie were regularly engaged. The only exception to this rule was a fellow who kept a large forge at the nearest village—one Lem Muncles, a hulking fellow with big beard and whiskers. I have no beard or whiskers; I

hate them, always did, and I hate them more than ever now. This fellow—this Muncles—struck me as having several objectionable features, one of which certainly was a tendency to thrust himself into the society of the Corleighs, and as I could see that Minnie was always a little confused in his presence, I resolved, on her account, to keep her out of his way. This was not so easy to do at the non-sensical feasts, picnics, and so on, they were continually having, but I did my best. What made it more difficult was that this person had some renown as a dancer, and Minnie was a sort of championess in that way; but as for his dancing—it was awful.

I had been to New York, and was to leave it on a certain night for Kansas, to pay my final bachelor visit, for it was half expressed, and half understood, that this time the wedding-day was to be fixed, and Minnie was to arrange for going back with me to Europe. Oh dear!—but I won't digress. I was pleased enough to present myself at the depôt, armed with my ticket for Denver, where Corleigh was to meet me, although it was a good distance from his farm, as he had business in the town.

It was night when we left New York, or Jersey City rather, and as a regular thing I should have taken a sleeping-car ticket; but, as it happened, an old acquaintance started with me, and he, having to leave before daylight in the morning, preferred not to go to bed, and so I sat up with him in the smoking-car. He left at the appointed time, and I got a refreshing snooze of two or three hours after he had gone. This, however, was so little to my liking in the way of travelling, that I determined to change into the sleeping-car at the junction, where we were to overtake another train, and the passengers would settle down for their long ride. But I was only just in time; the ticket I secured was the last, and at least half-a-dozen subsequent applicants were disappointed; indeed, I only got mine through the enforcement of the rule which forbids a section being retained when only one berth is used, if any passengers are wanting berths.

I need scarcely say that mine was an upper location, and when I found Number Four, the seats pertaining to it were occupied by a lady and gentleman, both young, but hardly so much by them as by a multiplicity of bags and valises. I am a very quiet, I may almost say a taciturn person, and I scarcely liked to ask the young couple to move their luggage, but

waited patiently until their attention was drawn to me, when, on their fixing their packages more compactly, I sat down, merely expressing my thanks by a little bow.

They were a very striking, I may say a distinguished looking couple, both very dark, and both very handsome, while the lady's dress appeared to me to be simply perfection. I felt a great desire to enter into conversation with them, for I naturally pictured Minnie and myself travelling in like manner; but although I went out of my usual track to induce them to converse, I was met with a repelling silence, or with monosyllables that repelled even more. One trifling incident revealed that my new companions were of somewhat irritable temperaments. The only package I carried was a small black valise—a particularly strong and good one—and as this contained a book I was reading, I determined to open it. I had placed it, I thought, by my side on the seat, but on looking round I saw it had fallen among the lady's parcels, which were piled against the side of the car. I leant forward and picked it up, and was about to open it, when the gentleman angrily snatched at it, and exclaimed: "What do you mean by meddling with my satchel, sir?" "Yours, indeed!" I ejaculated. "I beg your pardon, sir; 'tis mine." "No such thing, sir," he retorted, "and I insist upon your returning it instantly." I turned to the plate on which my initials were engraved in order to convince him, but, to my dismay, saw that, instead of "G. W." for Gregory Wilkins, there were "L. C. J." At the same moment I saw my own bag lying close to me—so close that I had literally overlooked it. I stammered out the commencement of an apology and explained how the mistake had occurred, but, with a frown far more dramatic than the occasion demanded, he almost jerked the bag from me. It certainly did seem incredible that I should not have perceived my own valise, and, feeling that I had been in the wrong, I determined to lose no opportunity of showing little attentions to them, and breaking the ice, if possible. In accordance with this resolve I made a point of assisting the lady with her shawl when the train stopped for meals, walking in company to the saloon with them, sitting at the same table, and returning to the cars with them; yet they did not soften much. Once, while sitting in the cars, the gentleman, after a long silence, suddenly asked me how far I was

going. "I have a ticket through to Denver," I said, "but know most of the stations very well, if you want any information." I smiled as I said this, to show that I should think it no trouble to assist them, but got no smile in return.

I was in no hurry to go to bed, so sat up watching our progress through the dark starlit country for a long time, taking my post at the end of the car, which was the last of the train. Oddly enough the gentleman from Number Four seemed disposed to sit up also; in fact, he was on the platform when I went there, but after remaining an hour or so, he retired, and I, feeling dull by myself, followed directly afterwards.

The next day passed away without particular incident, but I woke the following morning very early—when it was only just daylight, indeed—and found the train was slackening speed and about to stop. I felt anxious to change the heated atmosphere of the car for the purer air outside, but hate to disturb people unnecessarily. However, as I heard some one moving, I took courage and slipped down. The train stopped just as I emerged upon the platform, and, as I did so, I saw my dark friend stepping from it. He had evidently come out to enjoy a cigar in the clear morning air; so had I, but he gave such a chilling—I may almost describe it as a sinister—glance at me that I left him to himself, and merely sauntered about until the train started again.

We entered on the prairie that afternoon, and left behind us bustling cities and big hotels, to be seen no more for seven hundred miles. All this time I had not the slightest idea as to where my companions were going, but as they gathered up all their numerous packages when the train approached a station which I will call Peloponessus—one of the most miserable villages on the prairie—I presumed they meant to alight there. I asked them if it were so, and, in accordance with all their previous behaviour, received quite a defiant glare from the lady and a scowl from the gentleman, who said, "Yes, we are," in an angry tone, as though he would say, "And what are you going to do about it?" I half feared I had in some manner insulted him, yet this was hardly possible. I took no notice, however, and they left the train. As they did so a man appeared at the further end of the car, which had just become stationary, and gave a letter—I could see it was a telegram—to the conductor. The latter looked at it and

exclaimed: "Is Mr. Gregory Wilkins in the car?" Amazed at hearing my name thus unexpectedly pronounced, I rose hurriedly, and there sure enough was a telegram marked "Gregory Wilkins. To be delivered in the car at Peloponessus." I tore it open and read: "Wait for me at Peloponessus. I am forced to leave Denver on important business.—Quintus Corleigh." There was not a moment to spare; the conductor's cry of "All aboard!" was heard. I snatched up my rug and valise, and jumped from the train just as the engine-bell sounded.

Squalid and bare as was Peloponessus, there was no mistaking the road to it, for, beyond the few dull lights which twinkled from its hovels, there was nothing but the illimitable void and blackness of the prairie around; so I stumbled over the uncarved-for road—if road indeed it were—and once or twice thought I caught a glimpse of some figures in front of me. Judging that these might be my late companions, I tried to overtake them, as bad company would be better than none, but did not succeed until they had reached the door of a miserable, dirty-looking boarded house, styled in white letters so large that they were not only visible in the gloom, but seemed to dwarf the building, "Saloon."

As they entered I stepped in behind them. The sound of my feet attracted their attention, and they glanced round. I thought the woman would have fainted, she turned so deadly pale: she did stagger, and clutched the man's arm. He was nearly as pale as the lady, and seemed striving to say something through his set teeth; but at that moment the landlord came up to see what we wanted. As it turned out, this was a piece of wholly gratuitous trouble on his part, for he had nothing that we did want, and we made a wretched supper of black beer, whisky, and new bread. I fancied my fellow-traveller was drinking more than was good for him, but of course said nothing. Presently the landlord came in again, and said that with respect to sleeping accommodation he had none in that hotel, but that a gentleman in the next block (who was, as I found afterwards, a drunken German shoemaker) allowed travellers the use of his dwelling. "And there are two fine rooms, strangers," he continued, "the outern for you and your fixings, while madame can have the inside." "But we wish for a room to ourselves," said the gentleman. "Then you can't have it, boss," coolly returned the landlord; "the

gentleman's wife is very likely to come home to-night—she is out, peddling around—and if any other ladies want sleeping fixings there's none but them. So I expect you had better clear out." In deference to such a hint we had but one resource; we cleared out accordingly, and in two or three minutes found ourselves the sole occupants of the German gentleman's shanty.

It was a very uninviting place, with only a few articles of the rudest furniture in it. A long broad bench ran along each wall, and a dirty deal table was there; but bed or bedstead—in this outer room, at any rate—there was none. I looked dolefully round, then turned with a smile to my friends and was about to speak, when, to my amazement and horror, the man sprang desperately forward, throwing me, by the force of his bound, upon one of the large benches spoken of, and the next moment I saw the muzzle of a revolver within half-a-dozen inches of my face. "D—— you!" he said (it would have been a yell but for the painful, almost bursting efforts he was making to smother his voice); "I'll spoil your grinning! You have tracked us, I know, but you have made a mistake. You are a little too fool-hardy to be here alone. Silence! or you are a dead man." To my still greater horror, the lady said, in her silvery, subdued tones: "Shoot him, Jem! It is our only hope, and I reckon shots are too common here for one to be noticed." The cold perspiration ran from me. I believe I should not have been so utterly prostrated had I known what it was all about; but the attack was so sudden and unaccountable that I feared I was in the hands of two lunatics. "Now," continued the man, "a word above your breath, and I fire. What will you take to drop the scent? I will pay well, but I will have your life if you are obstinate." "I may speak in a low voice, then?" I whispered. He nodded assent. "I have not the slightest idea what you mean," I continued, "who you take me to be, or who you are yourselves." They exchanged smiles of incredulity, and the man's face grew more savage. "We know what you are very well," he said, with a bitter smile; "not perhaps so well as you know us, but you are a New York detective." "A New—— A what?" I gasped. "Oh, don't seek to waste time until some one comes," exclaimed the man; "your acts have been sufficient to tell all we know. You traced us to the cars; you

insisted on the berth above our own; you stuck to me if I only went out on the platform; you took up this lady's valise, under a paltry excuse, to make sure of her identity; you got up at dawn of day because I did, lest we should leave the car; you followed us to every meal; and now, instead of going on to Denver, you quit the train when we do and dog us still. What is your price? Tell us what you are to have, and if I can outbid the old wretch, I will." "Upon my honour—upon my life," I stammered out, "I know nothing of what you are talking about, or who you are, or who the old wretch is. I did not even know there was an old wretch. I have not watched you; everything has been accidental. I got out here because I received a telegram from the conductor. Here is my pocket-book: you will find my name in it, and papers which will prove that I am confidential agent to Prouts, Grouts, and Milberry, of New York and Liverpool." I handed the book to him; the pair exchanged glances; and with a sort of sigh he put up his revolver. "It is a most extraordinary thing," he said, "if what you say is true; and I must own these documents confirm your statement. If we have wronged you, accept our sincerest apology." "Yes; we shall never forgive ourselves," said the lady, who then began to cry; and her beautiful dark eyes looked more beautiful than ever with the tears slowly welling through the long lashes. After a few more words of explanation on my part, the gentleman said: "The best excuse I can offer for my conduct is to explain my position. The fact is, I have run away with this lady"—("Aha!" thought I, "a rich ward of someone's—lucky dog!")—"and by leaving the cars at this lonely spot, and travelling across the prairie to the north-east, doubling partially on our track, we shall get to my home, and throw the pursuers off the scent." "But with the precaution you have taken," said I, with a knowing smile, and a meaning glance at the lady's left hand, on which glittered a wedding-ring, "you need hardly fear any pursuit." The lady blushed and looked confused; the gentleman returned my smile as he resumed: "We do dread pursuit, anyway, and thinking we were followed, suspected you; and when you perseveringly hung on to our footsteps, even to this shanty, we naturally thought our position was almost hopeless. I had made up my mind to shoot you if I could not bribe you." "Yes, we had," sobbed the lady. It was a

dreadfully savage sentiment, but she looked prettier than ever as she said it.

It appeared they intended to start at day-break in a waggon which was waiting for them, and so we sat together till dawn, when we parted sworn friends; in fact, I had told him of my approaching marriage, and had promised to spend a few days with Minnie at his farm. It was indeed a lovely dawn, and as the pair drove from Peloponessus the train coming east drew up at the station. The lady, at a suggestion from her companion, I believe, leant from the side of the waggon and suffered me to kiss her cheek at parting. I did so. Then, as they drove off, I blushed perfectly purple to remember that all the passengers by the train might have seen me. One of them saw me, at any rate, for as I looked at the crowd which was hurrying from the cars to the saloon one form came striding towards me, and I recognised Mr. Corleigh. Delighted to see him, I hurried up and offered my hand, but, to my horror, he dashed it on one side, and called me a traitor, a wretch, a villain, a scoundrel, and—an epithet of etymology unknown—a “scallawag.” “Are you joking, sir?” I began. “No, you traitor!” he bellowed, recommencing his epithets. “You have succeeded in baffling us, but never shall you darken my doors again.” “But allow me—” I was just able to get out. “I will not, sir,” he shouted; “and I repeat, you shall never enter my house again. Give my daughter to a wretch like you! No, sir; I would marry her to a nigger with the small-pox in preference.” There was a great deal more of this, but not a word of explanation on his part, only abuse; nor was I allowed to finish a sentence; so I gave way, for his loud voice and excited gestures drew a crowd round us, and I paced the rear of Peloponessus wondering what second mistake had entwined itself around me.

Presently a quiet farmer-looking man came up, whose face seemed rather familiar to me, and he explained that he was a neighbour and fellow-traveller of Mr. Corleigh; for the sake of peace, he said, he ventured to think that I would not think of intruding on him, Mr. C., or his family, at present, or until they had had time to soften their indignation at my conduct. I must admit, he went on, that such behaviour as mine was calculated to shock them, although, of course, I could do as I liked. “But what have I done?” I naturally asked. “Well, sir,” he replied, “you

Phillydelphians and half Britishers mayn't think it much, but we do. Why do you identify yourself with such vile people?” “What vile people?” I echoed; “I know no such persons.” “Just so; from your point of view, of course not,” said the farmer, “but we think differently. You have associated yourself with the flight of Jem Gallett, the notorious gambler, and Mrs. Lucretia Cordelia Jendy, the wife of Deacon Jendy, an old friend and schoolfellow of Mr. Corleigh. You evidently warned them of the approach of that gentleman, who had received a telegram from poor Mr. Jendy, begging him to meet his wretched fugitive wife; and then, sir!—I cannot think what your heart must be made of!—you kissed the creature in purposed and marked defiance of the father of your intended bride. Oh, shame! shame!” For the second time at this confounded Peloponessus did the cold perspiration bedew my forehead, and I strove in strong language to impress upon my new friend how innocent I was, and what risks I had run; but in vain. I tried to argue that Mr. Corleigh might be mistaken in the person, as his schoolfellow must naturally be a person of some three-score, while this was a young woman of two-and-twenty; but he chose to consider I was sarcastic, and was justifying the “creature's” flight.

The only result of my earnestness was to succeed in turning him from being rather inclined to take my part, into one filled with the utmost contempt and dislike for a character so utterly indifferent to truth and morality, and he left me, saying he should counsel his friend Corleigh to take the most decided measures. And I suppose he was as good as his word, for I wrote very long letters to Mr. Corleigh and to Minnie—not daring to go near them—in which I set forth the whole of my action in the matter, and all the answer I got was the local paper with an account of the wedding of my pretty cousin Minnie to that preposterous lout Lem Muncles, the fellow with the big beard and whiskers who kept the forge.

I never heard any more of Deacon Jendy, or Mr. Jem Gallett, or of Mrs. Jem Gallett, as I suppose the deacon's runaway wife became, and I don't want to hear their names mentioned. Many a wretched and lonely evening have I passed, thinking of Minnie—but there, that is all over now. My story is finished, and I am very glad it was no longer. There was a little too much of it for me, while it lasted.

FALLACIES OF THE LEARNED.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE, in his *Vulgar Errors*, or, to give the work its proper title, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, enumerates a vast number of amusing mistakes which owe their origin, not so much to the ignorance of the people at large as to the strange wrong-headedness of individual men of learning. Classical writers especially must have been a credulous race; and even the fathers of the Church, whose business it assuredly was to keep clear of superstition, failed to exercise anything like due care in forming their belief upon the most ordinary matters. Often, indeed, when a costless experiment or a moment's thought would have been amply sufficient to prove the incorrectness of an opinion, these writers seem, out of sheer laziness, to have retailed without comment the most startling ideas and the most inconsistent principles; and, under such circumstances, it is not astounding that the giant-tongued physician felt called upon to set people right. No fallacy was so insignificant as to escape him, none so gigantic as to terrify him; and the result is that his *Vulgar Errors* is even now an interesting book, and stands at the head of all literature on the subject. Other authorities on the same topic are Ralph Battell, who in 1683 wrote *Vulgar Errors in Divinity Removed*; the anonymous author of *Vulgar Errors in Practice Censured* (1659); Thiers in his *Traité des Superstitions* (1679); Pierre Le Brun in his *Histoire Critique des Pratiques Superstitieuses*; Dr. Primrose in his Latin essay, *De Vulgi Erroribus*; and Fovargue in his *New Catalogue of Vulgar Errors* (1767); together with the various commentators on Browne, especially Alexander-Ross and Dean Wren. Upon these, and the first three books of Sir Thomas's *Magnum Opus*, are based the following notices of some fallacies of the learned.

Seneca, Claudian, Basil, Augustine, Gregory, Jerome, and perhaps Thucydides, agreed in the belief that crystal is simply ice strongly congealed; and such men as Scaliger, Albertus Magnus, and Brassavolus assented to the proposition. It is, however, but fair to say that there were always opponents of this theory. Pliny denied the assertion, and in his company we find Agricola, Diodorus Siculus, Cæsius Bernardus, and others. Of course, the test of specific gravity settles the matter at once. As for astronomical and geographical fallacies, their name is Legion.

Xenophanes asserted that the earth had no bottom; Thales Milesius averred that it floated in water; and almost every old writer has his own pet craze about the problem. A glimpse at the monkish map of the world which is still preserved in Hereford Cathedral will prove the unsystematic nature of the topographical studies in much later days; but such errors are too numerous to be more than briefly hinted at, and fallacies respecting crystals and precious stones afford by themselves sufficient matter for a tolerably long dissertation. To them, therefore, let us keep for the present. Pliny believed that the diamond will suspend or prevent the attraction of the loadstone if placed between it and a piece of iron; and, although the problem was one capable of speedy solution by experiment, he went on to ascribe the same remarkable property to the plant garlic. Eusebius Nierembergius, a learned Spaniard, had his own private craze. He imagined that the human body, left to turn as it would, would always point its head to the north; and it is hard to understand how this and most of the other fallacies connected with the loadstone escaped detection by experiment. Lælius Bisciola, for instance, asserted that one ounce of iron added to ten ounces of loadstone would only produce a total weight of ten ounces; and Apollonius and Beda join in testifying that there are certain loadstones which attract only at night; while other learned authorities affirm that the mineral in question, when burnt, gives off an unbearable stench, and that, if preserved in certain salts, it has the power of attracting gold, even out of the deepest wells.

That the diamond may be broken or softened by the blood of a goat was at one time a matter of almost universal belief. Pliny, Solinus, Albertus, Isidore, Augustine, and Cyprian all express their faith in it; and the fallacy has certainly the advantage of being at least a poetical one, for it is undoubtedly based on the Christian principle that the blood of Christ, the sin-offering, can soften the hardest heart. Yet its symbolic meaning appears to have been completely lost sight of by its later advocates; and Alexander Ross, while agreeing with Browne that goat's blood does not affect the diamond, hints that nevertheless it does indubitably soften some kinds of adamant—an idea no less indefinite than unfounded.

It may astonish some people to learn how wrong-headed even Aristotle was in

similar matters. He asserted, among other things, that a vessel full of ashes will contain as much water as it will when empty; and in another passage he stated, with perhaps a greater show of reason, that bolts and arrows grow red-hot in the course of rapid flight through the air. This, however, is, we know, incorrect. A candle may be fired from a gun so as to pass through a board; and, although a leaden bullet or an iron ball may splash and even melt upon impact on a hard substance, it is not the motion but the sudden arrest of that motion which generates the necessary amount of heat. Another common article of belief with ancient sages was that coral is soft under water, and only hardens when exposed to the air. Browne easily confuted the adherents of this view, but fell into equal error when he affirmed coral to be a plant. The amethyst was said to prevent drunkenness; a diamond placed beneath a wife's pillow was supposed to betray her infidelity; the sapphire was considered a preservative against enchantments; and the smoke of an agate was relied on to avert a tempest. Most of the writers of the middle ages believed that cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and nutmegs are the produce of the same tree; that the bay, the fig-tree, eagles, and sealskins afford protection from lightning; and that the use of bitter almonds is an effectual guard against intoxication. Two fallacies are attached to the herb basil. Hollerius declared that it propagated scorpions; while Oribasius, on the other hand, asserted that it was an antidote to the sting of those insects. One great authority, quoted by Browne, states that an ivy cup has the property of separating wine from water, the former soaking through, but the latter remaining. Sir Thomas seriously tried the experiment, but in vain; whereupon a hostile critic ascribed the failure to the "weakness of our racked wines." Another sage wrote that cucumbers had the power of killing by their natural cold; and yet another stated that no snake can endure the shade of an ash-tree.

Ctesias, the Cnidian, who lived A.D. 380, reported that the elephant has no joints, that consequently it is unable to lie down, and is in the habit of sleeping as it rests against a tree in its native forest. This peculiarity, he stated, is taken advantage of by the hunters, who cut down the tree, whereupon the huge beast rolls helplessly over on its back, and is easily captured or dispatched. The real facts are that elephants often sleep standing, and that the wilder

ones seldom lie down. Yet tame elephants as often sleep lying as standing. Christophorus à Costa declared that elephants have been known to speak; and this question is one which even Sir Thomas Browne never ventured to contradict—he thought it might be possible.

Many authorities united in believing that a badger's right legs are longer than his left, and the unfounded fallacy yet lingers in some parts of England, as does also a better known one connected with the bear. Pliny, Ælian, and Ovid all testify that this animal actually licks her newly-born cubs into shape; that, in fact, at their birth her young are completely unformed. With regard to the wolf there is a common superstition to the effect that the first sight of the animal strikes a man hoarse or dumb. This fallacy has given rise to the Latin expression, "*Lupus est in fabula*," used when a hiatus occurs in conversation, and to the French proverb, "*Il a vu le loup*." But no superstition concerning animals is more widely spread than that certain specimens—notably the crow, chough, raven, and deer—live for fabulous lengths of time. Hesiod and Ælian adopted it, and Hierocles, it may be, lightly satirised it when he wrote of his Simple Simon who, hearing that a raven would live for a hundred years, bought one that he might make the experiment and watch the result.

Alexander Ross, who, although he was no great sage, could, upon occasion, look at all things from a common-sense point of view, implicitly believed that an old man might, by some unchronicled means, restore his youth; but that idea was very general in his time, and even later. A similar fallacy concerning the kingfisher is even stranger. It was asserted that the dead bird moults and renews its feathers. Browne does not seem to have made any experiments to this effect; but he conducted some very elaborate ones to disprove that the kingfisher hung up by its bill will always turn its face to the wind. It is harder to account for such beliefs as this than for those in dragons, griffins, and other fabulous monsters, the existence of which was only doubted within comparatively recent times, except by very few. Ælian, Mela, and Herodotus with one voice testify to the griffin; though Pliny and Albertus Magnus are incredulous. Ross, with his usual respect for the ancients, was loath to run contrary to the old opinions. He thought that the griffin and phoenix existed in his day; but he suggested that these monsters

probably hid themselves for fear of being killed and eaten. And as for the phoenix, even Cyril, Epiphanius, Ambrose, and Tertullian believed in the marvellous bird—strange satire on ecclesiastical profundity. Aristotle, Ælian, Nicander, and Pliny all agreed with the fabulous stories of the salamander's liking for fire, though Dioscorides laughed at it; and many old writers seem to have been persuaded that asbestos is nothing more or less than salamander's wool. Again, Nicander and others credited the existence of the amphiscœna, or two-headed serpent; and even Ælian could stomach this, though he disallowed the hydra and the chimæra.

The vulgar error that moles are blind is derived from the statements of Aristotle and Pliny; but there is actually in Greece an indigenous animal, known as the rat-mole, which is blind. Alexander Ross innocently expresses his conviction that the eyes of our English mole are for ornament and nothing else; and in connection with this matter even the wary Sir Thomas Browne commits himself by declaring that no animal can possess more than two eyes. Pliny, Solinus, and Ovid held that the chamefeon lives entirely upon air. Similarly general was the idea that the ostrich is able to digest iron. Plato appears to be primarily responsible for the notion that swans sing very sweetly before death; and the idea took deep root, although Pliny denied it, as he did the belief that storks will live only in republics and free states. There was a prevalent idea that the lion is afraid of the cock; and Camerarius, to contradict it, cited the case of a lion springing into a farm-yard and devouring all the poultry. Whereupon Ross confidently averred that the lion in question must have been mad. Such wrong-headed reasoning as this it was that kept alive these and similar fallacies in the brains of men who ought to have known better.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXVII. MAUVAIN RETURNS TO THE SILVER ISLE.

IN the year 1848 an unusual circumstance occurred in the Silver Isle. Within the space of a fortnight two vessels anchored in the bay. The first was a regular trader to the place, and had visited it on and off for half-a-dozen years; its captain was well known, and being no

worse than the general run of captains, was welcome when he made his appearance. The second cast its anchor for the first time in the beautiful waters which surrounded the isle, and its captain was a stranger to the inhabitants, who were not in the habit of falling in love at first sight.

It was not, therefore, without uneasiness that the islanders watched the approach of the second vessel; they valued their privacy, and those among them best able to judge were aware that in their seclusion lay an inestimable blessing. It had never occurred that these white-winged visitors from the old world trod so closely upon each other's heels. There had always been a lapse of several months between the visits, and—especially to the older residents—any deviation from regular custom was seldom agreeable. But apart from these considerations, there was another reason why the approach of the strange vessel was observed with anxiety.

The captain with whom they were acquainted, and who had only just left them, had brought them news of a fearful convulsion in the country of the old world of which he was a citizen. A terrible crisis had occurred in the history of his land. The people had risen upon their masters, and had hurled them from their high places; the lives of those who made and administered the laws were jeopardised, and in many instances had been sacrificed by the wild passions of a bloody-minded populace, whose worst impulses were brought into play; all decency, restraint, and order were cast aside; religion was mocked at and its priests insulted; mad ideas of equality were being promulgated, and visionaries and fanatics, and those whose warped and astute intellects could use these for their purpose, declared the time had come for a new distribution of property. To lead the way to this, the prisons had been thrown open, and the vilest criminals had been let loose upon society, one or two unfortunate miscarriages of justice being held sufficient for the flowing of this tide; old rights were disregarded, and insanely-flattering theories were dangled before weak and ignorant masses, inflaming them with visions of an impossible Utopia. The streets were red with blood, and decent people were afraid to venture out of their houses. Wealth and wine and fine linen were henceforth to be the property of all, especially the property of those who did not own them. The millennium of the

wretched and needy had arrived. The rich might go hang. There were to be no more rich—except the poor. It was the era of topsy-turveydom in property and morals. By a common process of reasoning (which now and again in social convulsions glares for a moment, to be extinguished almost instantly by a better light), to be born rich was looked upon as a crime; and success, also, was a wrong to those who struggled or idled (particularly to the latter) and who had never reaped fair harvest.

More than ever grateful were the islanders for the peace and order which reigned in their land, and which had never yet been overturned. The pictures drawn by their friend awoke their compassion for him, and they proposed that he should stay among them; he declined.

"I have duties elsewhere," he said; "I must look after my wife and children. We must stand by our homesteads."

And then again he descended upon the misfortunes into which his country was plunged, and harrowed the hearts of the islanders with his stories.

"I never believed in the divine right of kings," he said, "but a ship must have its captain, call him what you will, king or president or any other name you choose; and the captain and his officers must know their business, or their vessel will get into the rapids or on the rocks. You have reason to thank Heaven that you are free from such fevers as I have described. You can live your lives in peace and security, and can enjoy the fruits of your labour. These wretches would wrest them not only from you but from your children. You are not surrounded by a pack of mongrels ready to snatch the bone from your mouth. Right is right, and there is rich man's right as well as poor man's right. That is what some do not or will not understand. At this moment hundreds of innocent persons are hiding in cellars and garrets and caves, awaiting in despair the opportunity to escape from the unreasoning fury of their fellow-creatures. It makes my blood boil to think of it. So you would give me welcome among you?"

"Yes," they answered, "you and yours."

"Well, I can but thank you, and if necessity drives I will take advantage of your offer. It is no small temptation to a man to be offered the opportunity of bringing up his children in virtue and peace."

So the captain, whose name was Raphael,

bade them farewell, and took his departure.

Happily, thought the islanders, our isle is but little known, and they almost regretted that a ship had ever visited it; for although they were not inhospitable, they believed it would be an evil day for them upon which men with new ideas came among them. What more did men want than enough? To work, to rest, to thank Heaven for health and food, to live in virtue and cleanliness, to enjoy what Nature with liberal hand held out to them—this was their gospel of earth, to which they added the spiritual Gospel of trust and hope in God. What greater calamity could happen to them than for this happy state to be disturbed? Therefore it was when, within three days after the departure of the first vessel, a second made its appearance over the distant sea-line, its white sails swelling to the Silver Isle, that its approach was viewed with feelings of uneasiness.

"What brings this stranger to the Silver Isle?" said the islanders, and they spoke of sending out a boat to enquire the business of the unexpected visitor.

On the deck of the vessel stood two men, close to the bulwarks, their eyes fixed upon the land. One was a man in the prime of life, the other a man whose hair was fast growing white. They were both handsome and distinguished; but there was a worn look in their eyes, as though they had passed through some recent trouble. For some time they gazed in silence; then the younger of the men spoke.

"It seems but yesterday!"

"Eh?" cried his companion, who did not hear the observation, and thought it addressed to him.

"It seems but yesterday!" repeated the younger man.

"Since when?"

"Since I visited this happy isle. I passed some delicious moments lying on tumbled hay in a field where men and women were working; I thought I was in Arcadia; and I remember well the walk to the market-place, over the hill-slopes and between hedges of barley and roses. I can trace the perfume of syringa at this moment."

"You were ever a rhapsodist. This isle is a happy one if happiness is to be found in stagnation. I was surfeited with it. When I lived here—how many years ago?—a lifetime, it seems—I was fit to die of lassitude. But time brings changes." He frowned at this, thinking of the change

time had brought to him. He was a fugitive when he first sought shelter within the peaceful land; he was a fugitive now; but, then, the future, an earthly future, was before him; he was scarcely in his prime; now, his hair was whitening, and nature was whispering, "Your time is coming; the earth is waiting for you." He brushed these thoughts away; it was his habit to rid himself of unpleasant reflection, and to this may be ascribed the circumstance that, though he was old enough for them, there were but few wrinkles in his handsome face. "It is to be hoped," he continued, "that the inhabitants have grown more amenable to reason."

"To what end, Mauvain?"

"To the end of a proper enjoyment of life."

"According to your understanding of it."

"It is not to be doubted," said Mauvain, "who is the better judge, they or I."

"For my part, I never had the inclination to teach other creatures how to enjoy, believing they had promptings of their own. I regard Nature as perfect; I have no doubt you find imperfections in her. It appeared to me that the inhabitants of the Silver Isle had a fair enjoyment of life."

"They may have, in their way."

"Then the end is served; a thankless task to try and improve upon it."

"One must do something with his days. You are happily constituted; the flight of a butterfly is food enough for your indolent soul; but I cannot lie down and dream the hours away."

"If my impressions are correct, the men of the isle have wills of their own."

"Then," said Mauvain, with a smile, "we must try and convince the women."

The younger man smiled also, but the smile almost instantly died from his lips. "You had a larger experience than I," he said; "mine was but a fleeting view, and when beauty is first presented to me something within me prevents me from staring it out of countenance. The women of the isle are fair."

"Very fair; I am afraid when I lived here I scarcely did them justice."

"Never too late to repair an error, Mauvain."

"It shall be my aim."

"Mauvain, I will make a confession to you. I have not been fortunate with women hitherto."

"It is at once a confession and a revelation. Your friends think otherwise."

"My friends flatter me; I never merited their good opinion, being in that respect like many other luckier dogs than myself, who are better thought of than they deserve. Do you know, Mauvain, there has ever been in my heart an unsatisfied longing? The days have glided on smoothly enough. There have been laughter, music, flowers, fair and gracious women, sweet protestations, and sometimes sweeter tears, old wine and young beauty in their full ripeness. These should be sufficient for a man, and are, for most; they have not been for me. Sometimes the flowers have faded in my hand or as I inhaled their fragrance; sometimes the music jarred or I heard in it the discordant laughter of a disappointed hope; sometimes I saw wrinkles in the fairest face. They have not brought to me what I have yearned for in my heart of hearts."

"What have you yearned for, Harold? Describe it."

"Difficult, if not impossible, for it springs not so much from others as from an unsatisfied longing of the soul. The wind has whispered it, the leaves have murmured it; I have seen it in the gloaming. The fault is in myself that I have never loved."

"You are poetising, Harold, as I have heard you do a hundred times before, or you have lied terribly."

"If I must choose between the two, I have lied terribly. One must say something. 'Am I fair?' 'You are beautiful.' 'Do you love me?' 'With all my soul.' 'Swear that you will never love another!' 'I swear it!' Is not that the way the comedy goes? I fall back upon a morsel of your own philosophy—one must do something with his days—and though, unlike you (to be unlike you in anything is to be at a disadvantage), I am fond of dreaming, the world will not always give you leisure. A bouquet is to be bought, a white wrist is held out for the fastening of a glove, a note has to be read and answered. I am continuing the comedy, Mauvain. Nature made me my own enemy. There is something distressingly responsive in my outward self; my features have a trick of being sympathetic, without consulting my wishes. A woman smiles upon me, and displays her white teeth—there is a world of love in the well-shaped mouth; her eyes look languishingly into mine; I return her smile; my eyes melt in the light of hers; she presses my hand—ah! the soft velvet palms! what have they not to answer for!

I press hers ; and so the comedy proceeds, Mauvain ; but my heart plays no part in it. It is as cold as stone."

"Absolutely ?" said Mauvain, in an amused tone.

"Absolutely," said Harold, in a serious tone.

"Harold, you charm me out of myself, and cause me to forget events which have made us fugitives from our native land."

"I am happy to be of use."

"Have you subjected this comedy of yours to criticism ?"

"I have searched and examined it learnedly and severely, and I have always condemned it."

"Then have you been a most insincere actor, having played in it so often in a mask which no man—or woman—saw."

"Admitted. But how different has it been with you ! You have entered heart and soul into your pleasures. Life for you has been a jewelled cup, into which love flowed as often as you drained it ; and you drained it often, Mauvain, and with zest."

"You have envied me."

"Never. I would not have changed with you ; I would not change with you. For if it happen, as it may, that that for which I yearn come within my reach, I shall taste a joy it is impossible for you ever to have known, ever to know !"

"Coxcomb !" exclaimed Mauvain. "But you are right, perhaps, in that part of your hypothesis which applies to the future. Alas ! you have thirty years the advantage of me. What would I give for those thirty years !"

"You are fond of life, Mauvain."

"I worship it, and deplore the days that pass too quickly by. Yes ; I am fond of life, and use it to its proper end. Nature bestows it, and says, Enjoy. I obey ; I open my heart and soul to the pleasure to be derived from all life, animate and inanimate, which surrounds me, and like the bee I live on what is fairest."

"And sink to earth, clogged with sweetness."

"What, then ? It is not death ; nature recuperates, and bids you enjoy once more. Ungrateful to refuse. It is the only true philosophy."

"Feed on it, then ; I have a philosophy of my own."

"And so, Harold, after all these years you come to the conclusion that you have never loved."

"Never ; and you, Mauvain, seriously ?"

"To love seriously," replied Mauvain, laughing, "is to substitute pain for pleasure."

"But in truth ?"

"In truth, then, and without seriousness, I have loved a hundred times. Nature in me has a most devout admirer, and when spring comes round I open my heart to it. Youth—which means beauty, Harold—has an irresistible attraction to me. Ah, if I possessed it in my own person ! If it could be bought !"

"There are such fables."

"That is the misfortune of it—they are only fables. I must die one day, I suppose. If I could choose the time and manner of my death, I would die in spring, with evidences of beauty's birth around me."

"Would it not be better," said Harold grimly, "to die surrounded by wintry aspects ? One could say good-bye with greater equanimity. Mauvain, I am curious upon certain matters. You will pardon me if I continue speaking on a theme I find very fascinating."

"Certainly. The theme is——"

"You, Mauvain—yourself, your nature, motives, inner life ; for years you have fascinated me."

"You are entertaining me with a succession of surprises, Harold. You have made a study of me, then ?"

"In my idle way, Mauvain, I have made a study of you."

"Give me some idea of myself—for of course you know me thoroughly."

"Most thoroughly, I think," said Harold listlessly ; "but I will wait for a more appropriate opportunity to satisfy your curiosity. In the meantime, satisfy mine."

"Proceed ; you will not overstep the line."

"That divides us ? No ; I will not overstep it. Mauvain, you and I know something of each other ; we have shared danger and pleasure together. How many adventures have we been engaged in ! Light enterprises undertaken to put life into dull hours ! And always successful, Mauvain. However small the whim, it was gratified, never mind at what expense to others."

"Do you intend," said Mauvain, "to drag the whole world into your exordium ?"

"Heaven forbid ! Every man for himself ; every woman, too ; but she generally is."

"I have found it so."

"Selfish to the backbone ; cunning ; artful ; but unfortunately for herself, weak."

"Not always, Harold," said Mauvain, following with but an idle attention the current of his companion's spoken thoughts.

"These weak creatures are capable of much that a man would shrink from. Given to each equal scope and opportunity, I would sooner incur the hatred of three men than of one woman."

"Yes, we learn these lessons; but a woman can be persuaded; her nature is gracious; man's is brutal. There is a weapon which, skilfully used, is stronger than woman's whole artillery. That weapon is flattery. You have used it, Mauvain, with effect. True, that woman is capable of much; self-sacrifice, for one thing. Then she has faith; man has not. You follow me, Mauvain?"

"For the life of me, Harold, I cannot see where you are drifting."

"Aptly said. Nor can I; but I have been drifting ever since I can remember, being governed by accidental moods."

Mauvain turned his eyes with languid interest upon the face of his friend, saying: "I do believe you are speaking in earnest."

"If so, it must be accidental, for such a man as I cannot but be barren of serious intention."

"Seriousness is a mistake. He is the wisest who is the least serious."

"Then folly is wisdom."

"Fools are the most serious of men."

"It is a pleasure to converse with a man of intellect; therein lies part of your fascination."

"One who did not know you as well as I do, Harold, would suppose you had a direct motive in your compliments."

"I have a motive, Mauvain; I wish you, in honest truth, to answer me one question."

"A hundred, Harold."

"I will not tax you. It is a question concerning woman. Of all the women you have loved whom did you love the best?"

"Of all the days I have enjoyed," retorted Mauvain, "which did I enjoy the most? Of all the dinners I have eaten—

and so on, and so on. Harold, I cannot answer you, for a sufficient reason."

"The reason being——"

"That I do not know; and indeed, if I did, to express preference for one would be to wrong the others."

"Think a moment, Mauvain. Is there not one to whom, in looking back, your heart turns and acknowledges before all others?"

"One! there are a dozen! Are you answered now?"

"Yes; and I thank you. You have a light spirit, Mauvain; you were created for enjoyment. My last voyage to this fair isle was not made in such agreeable company. Perhaps you forget what you said to me when you proposed the trip. When a man was surfeited with the sweets or disgusted with the buffets of the world, you said, the Silver Isle was the land to come to to spin out what remained of the days of his life. Without premeditation, you justify your words. In the Silver Isle, said you, dwells the spirit of simplicity. Well, we shall have time to search for it."

"And if it present itself to you in the shape of a beautiful girl!"

"I will fall at her feet and worship her. Would not you?"

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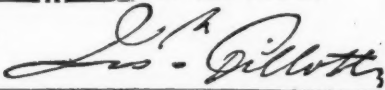
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